

Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 12575

E.O. 11652: ADS JUL 31, 1975

TAGS: PINT, TH

SUBJ: CHIANG MAI BY-ELECTION--JUNE 29, 1975

FOLLOWING TEL SENT ACTION BANGKOK FM CHIANG MAI JUNE 26
RPTD FOR YOUR INFO:

CHIANG MAI 0153

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, TH

SUBJECT: CHIANG MAI BY-ELECTION - JUNE 29, 1975

REF: CHIANG MAI 0143

1. SUMMARY - FRONTRUNNERS IN BY-ELECTION ARE THAI NATION, AGRICULTURE FORCE AND DEMOCRAT CANDIDATES. DEMOCRAT IS ATTACKING GOVERNMENT MISMANAGEMENT WHILE THAI NATION CHOICE CONTINUES TO STRESS HE AS "GOVERNMENT" CANDIDATE CAN DO MOST FOR LOCAL AREA. INTEREST IS LOW, AND POOR VOTER PARTICIPATION IS EXPECTED. EMD SUMMARY.

2. BIG NAMES FROM BANGKOK ARE CONVERGING ON CHIANG MAI
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POLITICAL SCENE AS CANDIDATES VIE FOR LAST MINUTE PUBLIC

ATTENTION WITH ONLY LIMITED SUCCESS IN AROUSING VOTER INTEREST. "GOVERNMENT" CANDIDATE KANOK RATANAI (THAI

NATION) IS HOLDING HIS OWN, BUT JUST BARELY. HIS SLIPPAGE LAST WEEK PROMPTED THE SAP TO HEDGE ITS BETS AND GIVE A REPORTED 100,000 BAHT TO MORE PROMISING AGRICULTURE FORCE CANDIDATE NIKOM DANRONGKITKASET. (THE "MONEY MAN" FOR NIKOM IS REPORTEDLY MINISTER IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE AND CHIANG MAI MP PRIDA PHATTHANATHABUT WHO, ALTHOUGH A PEACEFUL PEOPLE PARTY MEMBER, MADE THE SAP FUNDS AVAILABLE.) WORD OF THIS "UNDERHANDED DEAL" SOON EMERGED, HOWEVER, AND NIKOM'S POPULARITY HAS SUFFERED. DEPUTY P.M. GEN'L PRAMAN HAS NOW ORDERED NATIONAL HEAD OF TOBACCO CURERS ASSOCIATION TO COME BOOST SUPPORT FOR KANOK BY CALLING TOGETHER INFLUENTIAL TOBACCO MEN IN CHIANG MAI. KANOK, AN M.D. WHO MADE HIS NAME LOCALLY BY TURNING HOUSE CALLS INTO A SORT OF ROVING CLINIC, HAS REPORTEDLY RECEIVED 600,000 BAHT FROM HIS BANGKOK SUPPORTERS.

3. MEANWHILE, DEMOCRAT CANDIDATE INSOM CHAISAWONG SEEMS TO HAVE EMERGED AS TODAY'S (JUNE 26) FRONT RUNNER. DEMOCRATS HAVE BEEN MOST WILLING AMONG PARTIES RUNNIN/ TO SEND SPEAKERS IN SUPPORT OF CANDIDATE. RALLY FEATURING SENI PRAMOT LAST WEEK ATTRACTED CROWD OF ABOUT 1000 IN MUANG CHIANG MAI, AND DEMOCRATS ARE REPORTEDLY SENDING UP MORE PARTY BIGWIGS (INCLUDING FORMER FONMIN PICHAI RATAKUN AND THEIR "BEST ORATOR", MP CHUAN LIPHAJ) JUNE 27. DEMOCRATS HAVE STRESSED GOVERNMENT MISMANAGEMENT DURING THEIR CAMPAIGN, FOCUSING PARTICULARLY ON ALLEGATION THAT PRASIT KANCHANAWAT AS RICE MERCHANT HAS USED POSITION OF HOUSE SPEAKER TO RAISE CONSUMER RICE PRICES. DEMOCRATS HAVE ALSO CRITICIZED KANOK'S PROMISE TO OBTAIN MONEY FOR CHIANG MAI FROM BANGKOK SAYING IT WILL LEAD AS IN PAST TO REPAYMENTS FOR BANGKOK FAVORS BY GRANTING SLAUGHTER AND OTHER PERMITS IN CHIANG MAI TO BANGKOK POLITICIANS. DEMOCRATS ALSO ASK IGW PRIDA, WHO DECLARED BANKRUPTCY AFTER LAST ELECTION, HAS MANAGED TO CLEAR HIS DEBTS AND PROVIDE MONEY FOR NIKOM'S CAMPAIGN. (IT IS INTERESTING ALTHOUGH NOT PARTICULARLY SIGNIFICANT

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THAT INSOM DERIVES PART OF HIS INCOME BY RUNNING THIPPANET THEATER COMPLEX, ONE OF WHOSE MAJOR SHARE-HOLDERS IS P.M. PHUKRIT PRAMOT.)

4. POSTERS AROUND TOWN HAVE NOTICEABLY INCREASED DURING PAST WEEK, AND SOUND TRUCKS PROCLAIMING CANDIDATE VIRTUES ARE RUNNING COMPETITION WITH THOSE OF LOCAL MOVIE HOUSES. REPORTS ARE THAT SPT CANDIDATE BUNSANONG'S

POSTERS ARE BEING RIPPED DOWN BY VILLAGERS, AND BUN-SANONG, WHO HFS DONE MOST CAMPAIGNING IN REMOTE AREAS, HAS BEEN RECIPIENT SCURRILOUS REMARKS THAT HE CONCEN-TRATING ON VILLAGES BECAUSE HE FEARS COMING TO CHIANG MAI AND FACING GUN RUNNING CHARGES. BUNSANONG REPORTEDLY CONTINUES ANTI-MAERICAN CHARGES IN HIS CAMPAIGN WHILE OTHER CANDIDATES HAVE NOT ADDRESSED INTERNATIONAL ISSUES.

5. WE HESITATE TO MAKE PREDICTIONS, BUT AS OF THIS WRITING IT APPEARS KANOK, NIKOM AND INSOM HAVE BEST CHANCES. GIVEN FACTS THAT FARMERS ARE PRESENTLY VERY BUSY WITH PLANTING SEASON AND URBAN DWELLERS ARE TRADITIONALLY APATHETIC, VOTER TURN-OUT IS EXPECTED TO BE DISAPPOINTING. HARBIN
WHITEHOUSE

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